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C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 008492

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2016

TAGS: EFIN PTER KTFN ETTC ECON SA

SUBJECT: REVISED COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED FOR FRANCES FRAGOS TOWNSEND, NOVEMBER 4-7, 2006.

REF: A. RIYADH 8395
¶B. WHITE HOUSE 251853Z

Classified By: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION DAVID RUNDELL FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶11. (C) The U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia welcomes and grants provisional country clearance for Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHSCT), Homeland Security Council, Ms. Frances Fragos Townsend; Director for Combating Terrorism Strategy, National Security Council, Mr. Todd Hinnen; Aide to APHSCT, Homeland Security Council, Mr. Michael Taylor, and Assistant to APHSCT, John Pearson, to conduct counterterrorism bilateral discussions from November 4-7, 2006 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

¶12. (U) Due to recent severe budget cuts, the Mission must direct charge all visit support costs. Country clearance is expressly conditional on advance receipt or assurances of complete fiscal data covering all support expenses for all visitors and delegation members. Please see Para 6 for details.

¶13. (C) Mission Control Officer will be William Steele, Bilateral Programs Management Officer. Assisting will be Lubaina Qaiyumi, Economic Officer. Contact numbers are: Embassy MSG Post 1 - (966-1) 488-3800, Ext. 4111; Embassy Motorpool - (966-1) 488-3800, Ext. 4252; William Steele, Control Officer Home (966-1) 482-2137, Office (966-1) 488-3800 Ext. 4086, Cell Phone (966-50) 617-4907; and Lubaina Qaiyumi, Co-Control Officer Home (966-1) 482-2704, Office (966-1) 488-3800 Ext. 4279, Cell Phone (966-50) 355-2145 and E-Mail Address: QaiyumiLB@state.gov.

¶14. (SBU) Lodging reservations for the delegation have been requested at the Conference Palace Hotel in Riyadh from November 4-7.

Standard Advice to Travelers

Visit Typical Expenses

¶15. (U) VIP: We calculate the average cost per day/per person to be approximately USD 197.00 for VIP visitors with a special agenda above the rank of Office Director to any post in Saudi Arabia. Actual costs will be charged to the fiscal data provided.

¶16. (U) Typical costs include, but are not limited to, American and Locally Employed Staff's overtime, holiday pay, and premium pay as applicable, field travel by Embassy personnel, transportation costs, vehicle rental, telephone

installation and service, equipment rental, printing expenses, supplies, and any other costs that can be directly attributed to the visit.

¶17. (U) Operational Support: Typical costs include overtime for Locally Employed Staff, overtime and mileage for motorpool if after-hours transportation is required, cell phone, and any other costs that can be directly attributed to the visit.

¶18. (SBU) Security: As a result of the continuing terrorist threat in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates General in Saudi Arabia became one-year unaccompanied posts effective August 12, 2004.

¶19. (SBU) All incoming personnel (TDY or PCS) must receive an RSO-approved security brief prior to or upon arrival. The Control Officer designated in the country clearance cable is responsible for ensuring the appropriate brief is obtained. For TDY personnel with stays of less than 96 hours and where travel is limited to Riyadh with nearly all visit activity occurring within the Diplomatic Quarter, an RSO-written brief provided in paper or electronic form to the visitor by the Control Officer will satisfy the requirement. For all other circumstances, the Control Officer must provide the traveler the paper or electronic brief before or upon the visitor's arrival, PLUS arrange for an appropriate security briefing session with the RSO.

¶10. (SBU) Travel is performed only in Embassy vehicles. Use of taxis, private cars, hotel shuttles, and public transportation for all travel within the city is not authorized.

¶11. (SBU) Travelers to Saudi Arabia are advised that their hotel rooms and any telephones used may be monitored during their stay in the Kingdom. Travelers should report any unusual occurrences to the Embassy or Consulate General RSO.

¶12. (U) On December 6, 2004, there was an armed attack on the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah, resulting in casualties among the non-American staff and damage to Consulate facilities. Due to such targeted attacks against American facilities and citizens, resulting in deaths, injuries and kidnappings, and the continuing serious threat to their safety while in Saudi Arabia, the Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens to defer travel to Saudi Arabia.

¶13. (SBU) TYDers are reminded of the potential for further terrorist actions against U.S. citizens abroad, including in the Persian Gulf region. USG employees who travel to Saudi Arabia are required to follow all security precautions as prescribed by the Regional Security Officer including the use of armored vehicles. From time to time, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Saudi Arabia may restrict the travel of official Americans or suspend public services for security reasons.

¶14. (SBU) Although counter-terrorism efforts have succeeded in diminishing terrorist capabilities in Saudi Arabia, terrorist groups continue to target housing compounds, hotels, methods of transportation, and commercial establishments where Westerners can be found. Saudi Government facilities are also targets as demonstrated by the December 29, 2004 attempted bombing of the Ministry of Interior. In addition to car bombs and armed assaults involving multiple gunmen against such facilities, terrorists have also used ambush attacks to kidnap and/or assassinate individual Westerners.

¶15. (SBU) These incidents argue strongly that U.S. citizens in Saudi Arabia should maintain a low profile, keep travel to a minimum, vary travel routes and times, and treat any mail from unfamiliar sources with suspicion. American citizens are also cautioned to remain alert and aware of their surroundings while moving about the city.

¶16. (SBU) The Embassy approves the use of computers, laptops, and digital cameras at post in accordance with 12 FAM 600 established regulations. Stand-alone use of laptops will be allowed with the standard caveat that nothing be connected to DOS systems. Computers, laptops, and digital cameras must stay outside of CAA areas. Prior notification of the use of cameras must be approved by the RSO. It should be noted that Saudi law, especially as it is interpreted in the capital of Riyadh, rigidly controls photography. We strongly urge visitors to avoid taking photographs in any public place without the express and prior involvement of the RSO.

¶17. (SBU) **Visas:** Visitors are also reminded that valid visas for Saudi Arabia are required at all times. Travelers are advised that submitting passports to the Saudi authorities that contain Israeli visas or evidence of travel to Israel may result in difficulties securing a Saudi visa or gaining entry to the Kingdom. Official travelers to Saudi Arabia should request a two-year, multiple-entry visa from the nearest Saudi Embassy or Consulate.

¶18. (SBU) **Passports:** Visitors are reminded to keep a copy of their passport with them at all times while in Saudi Arabia as it may be needed for identification. The original should be kept in a safe place.

¶19. (SBU) **Prohibited Items:** Strict Islamic law is the foundation of the Kingdom's customs and practices. The norms for public behavior are extremely conservative. Saudi Arabia outlaws the importation, sale, or use of alcohol in the Kingdom, and visitors must not attempt to bring any alcohol, pork products, or printed materials that may be construed as pornographic or proselytizing into the Kingdom. Penalties include confiscation, fines, and may extend to denial of entry.

¶20. (SBU) **Drugs:** Saudi Arabia strictly prohibits the importation of controlled substances, including narcotics, methamphetamines, depressants, and hallucinogens. The penalty for violation of this law is death.

¶21. (SBU) Prescription drugs in small quantities, clearly labeled, should cause no difficulties. Problems arise when they are in large quantities, unlabeled, or lack documentation (such as a copy of the prescription), or when they are deemed illicit by Saudi authorities. Many drugs sold in nearby countries without a prescription are considered illegal here. Individuals are arrested for possession of these drugs.

¶22. (U) **Dress:** While visiting the Kingdom, women and men should dress conservatively. Guidance issued by the Saudi Embassy in Washington states that non-Muslim women are not required to wear an abayya, but should dress conservatively (loose fitting skirts/dresses that fall well below the knee with long sleeves and a high neckline) when in public. This is also the position of the U.S. Embassy.

¶23. (SBU) However, while Embassy personnel are not required to wear the abayya and/or hijaab (scarf) on official business, many Western women choose to wear the abayya and hijaab while conducting their personal affairs in order to avoid unwanted attention and/or harassment by the Mutawwa'in (religious police). Upon request, the Embassy will loan female visitors abayyas for the duration of their stay in the Kingdom.

¶24. (SBU) It is the policy of the Embassy to support a woman in her decision to wear or not wear the abayya and/or hijaab.
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